

CITY OF SANIBEL

RESOLUTION NO. 09-018

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITYCOUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANIBEL, FLORIDA, SUPPORTING THE ACQUISITION OF U.S. SUGAR LANDS AND ADJACENT LANDS SOUTH OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE BY THE STATE OF FLORIDA TO RESTORE A CONTINUOUS SOUTHERN FLOW-WAY TO THE EVERGLADES AND TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE EXCESSIVE WATER RELEASES FROM THE LAKE TO THE RIVERS AND ESTUARIES; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City Council supports the recent changes to the proposed acquisition announced November 12, 2008, by Governor Charlie Crist that reduces overall costs and the burden of handling infrastructure such as sugar mills and rail lines; and

WHEREAS, the South Florida Water Management District should retain at least 80% of the U.S. Sugar owned lands to be purchased west of Lake Okeechobee for the purposes of water treatment and storage before discharge into the Caloosahatchee River (see attached map for S-4 Basin Lands; Disston Water Control District Lands), instead of swapping or utilizing them for other purposes; and

WHEREAS, the State needs to work with the local communities that may be adversely affected economically by agricultural conversion to develop alternative opportunities and employment in ways that do not add to the nutrient or other pollutant issues in Lake Okeechobee, connected rivers or the Everglades; and

WHEREAS, any Inland Ports, as at least 6 potential sites are being discussed, or other economic projects must be located in a manner that does not preclude or significantly diminish flow-way designs south of Lake Okeechobee or result in stormwater pollution or additional blockage or flow from new roads or rail lines; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Inland Port site at Okeelanta on Florida Crystals lands south of Lake Okeechobee in Palm Beach County, also called the South Bay site, is an example of a location damaging to a flow-way design that should not be carried forward; and

WHEREAS, there is already some momentum for this inappropriate site with the Palm Beach County Commission and the Port of Miami; and

WHEREAS, a preferable site would be current agricultural lands either west or east of Lake Okeechobee that are closer to the communities affected and not in the path of the flow-way; and

WHEREAS, a good Inland Port site should also not consist of wetlands or important wildlife habitat and an example of such a site is the Hilliard Brothers property in Hendry County; and

WHEREAS, legislative approval and funding is essential and timely for the Caloosahatchee River Watershed Protection Plan which includes the C-43 Reservoir with a stormwater treatment area and other important nutrient reduction projects within the Caloosahatchee Basin; and

WHEREAS, funding for the C-43 project with a stormwater treatment area needs to continue to be supported at both Federal and State levels; and

WHEREAS, the State and Federal Government must not let the sugar lands acquisition project divert momentum from critical Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program projects without which the southern flow-way would not function; and

WHEREAS, the Modwaters, Decomp, Northern Everglades, and Lake Okeechobee Restoration plans should proceed with an accelerated pace; and

WHEREAS, conversely, all funding and further action on the Aquifer Storage and Recovery projects of Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program should be immediately halted as cost-benefit and environmental issues have rendered this program dysfunctional and unlikely to succeed; and

WHEREAS, to ensure adequate freshwater inflows during the dry periods, the City of Sanibel supports Lee County in its efforts to secure a water reservation from the South Florida Water Management District for the Caloosahatchee River and its estuary; and

WHEREAS, the water reservation would make it more likely to achieve desired minimum flows and levels, especially during the dry season, for the health of the Caloosahatchee River and upper estuary; and

WHEREAS, these minimum flows can be critical for fisheries and upper estuarine aquatic life that require at least some freshwater input and will also serve to help prevent stratification and stagnation, conditions that can lead to low dissolved oxygen levels and algae blooms;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Sanibel, Florida, that:

SECTION 1. The Sanibel City Council supports the acquisition of U.S. Sugar lands and adjacent lands south of Lake Okeechobee to restore a continuous southern flow-way to the Everglades and to significantly reduce excessive water releases from the Lake to the rivers and estuaries on both coasts.

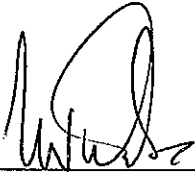
SECTION 2. Effective date

This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

DULY PASSED AND ENACTED by the Council of the City of Sanibel,

Florida, this 17th day of February, 2009.

AUTHENTICATION:

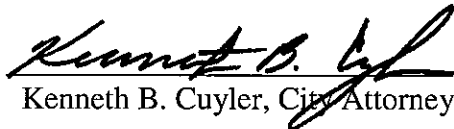


Mick Denham, Mayor



Pamela Smith, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Kenneth B. Cuyler, City Attorney

2/6/09
Date

Vote of Council Members:

Denham	<u>yea</u>
Ruane	<u>yea</u>
Harrity	<u>yea</u>
Jennings	<u>yea</u>
Pappas	<u>yea</u>

Date filed with City Clerk: February 17, 2009

